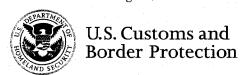
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U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC 20229



Commissioner

December 21, 2006

The Honorable Robert Rice Mayor of Havre Havre, Montana 59501

Dear Mayor Rice:

Thank you for your letter of December 1, 2006, on behalf of the City of Havre, Montana. In your correspondence, you requested that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) consider establishing 24-hour border crossing service at the Port of Wildhorse, MT. We have recently completed our review of this matter. Please allow me to outline our findings.

In recent years, CBP has reviewed the traffic patterns at Wildhorse in regards to expanding operating hours. In 2005, the daily average number of passenger car crossings was 30 vehicles per day. Currently, the hourly crossing average is between three and five vehicles, totaling approximately 35 vehicles per day. The average number of daily truck crossings processed is eight per day. After reviewing this data, it suggests that the traffic does not support an extension of hours, and that our staffing and hours of operation are aligned with the workload.

In addition to traffic levels, the Port of Wildhorse is a permit port, in which only prearranged commodities and goods are admissible. If the port's operations were expanded to other cargo, the port would have to be reclassified as a commercial port, undergo significant modifications to facilitate the inspection and processing of commercial cargo, and increase its staffing level to support 24-hour operations.

Additionally, business hours at our northern ports are coordinated with the Canadian Government. Any changes would require negotiation with the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA). CBSA has expressed a similar opinion that an increase in operating hours is not warranted at this time.

As a result of these findings, we cannot actively consider expanding the hours of operation at the Port of Wildhorse.

I appreciate your interest in Customs and Border Protection. If we may offer further assistance, please contact Ms. Patricia Duffy, Executive Director, Field and Resource Management, Office of Field Operations, at (202) 344-1850.

Sincerely,

W. Kalph Bashan
W. Ralph Basham

Commissioner